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For Immediate Release - September 14, 2017

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Baker-Polito Administration Unveils New Thoreau Exhibits at Walden Pond State Reservation

Commemorates Author's Conservation Legacy in Honor of "Climate Week"

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CONCORD — The Baker-Polito Administration today unveiled new interpretive exhibits at Walden Pond State Reservation commemorating the life and conservation legacy of author and philosopher Henry David Thoreau. The opening of the exhibits represents the Commonwealth's commitment to environmental consciousness and preserving the lessons of Thoreau. Today's announcement coincides with "Climate Week," a week highlighting the state's efforts to prepare for and combat climate change. Additionally, it is the one year anniversary of Governor Charlie Baker's signing of [Executive Order 569](#), which builds upon the Administration's nation-leading efforts to reduce emissions, lays out a comprehensive approach to further mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, safeguards residents, municipalities, and businesses from the impacts of climate change, and build a more resilient Commonwealth.

"Honoring Henry David Thoreau with this exhibit, one of Massachusetts' most profound environmental leaders and someone who taught generations of students, conservationists, and civil rights leaders about the significance of our unalienable rights and the environment, is a fitting tribute during 'Climate Week,'" **said Governor Baker**. "Our Administration continues its steadfast commitment to protecting the environment to ensure today's natural resources are preserved and well protected for tomorrow's leaders."

"Our Administration is proud of the public-private partnerships between local and national leaders of conservation organizations who worked together contributing to this exciting and educational to honor Henry David Thoreau," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. "The talents and passion of many went into the construction of this beautiful visitor center and these impressive exhibits, and I am thrilled to welcome hundreds of thousands of annual visitors to Walden Pond, where they will have an opportunity to learn even more about Thoreau's message of conservation."

All exhibits were fabricated and designed at a cost of \$320,000 and emphasize last year's completion of the \$7.2 million Visitor Center, which features locally sourced building materials, net-zero energy LEED-Gold design, and a 100 kW solar canopy that produces more energy than is used by the facility. All exhibits were designed with the help of nonprofit organizations, including the Walden Woods Project, the Thoreau Society, the Concord Free Public Library, Concord Museum, and the Morgan Library in New York City.

"Generations of conservation leaders who drew their inspiration from the writings of Henry David Thoreau will truly marvel at the new Walden Pond State Reservation's Visitor Center and supporting exhibits," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "I cannot think of a better way to honor Thoreau, who taught us so much about the importance of our natural world, than unveiling these exhibits as we celebrate 'Climate Week' and the extensive work and dedication that this Administration has committed to combating climate change."

"The Department of Conservation and Recreation continues to recognize and support the mission of Henry David Thoreau and the impact that Walden Pond had on his life, and today's announcement culminates the design of a facility that stands as strongly in support of his ideals as his original cabin, where he lived simply among the reservation for two years, two months, and two days," **said DCR Commissioner Leo Roy**. "The Baker-Polito Administration honors his message as we continue to serve a half-million annual visitors to the park and lead them in discussions on Thoreau's revelations of environmental consciousness."

The unveiled exhibits at Walden Pond State Reservation include:

- A three-dimensional map with interpretive panels orienting visitors to the reservation;
- A timeline of Thoreau's stay with select quotes from his seminal work, *Walden, or Life in the Woods*;
- A series of artifacts displaying Walden Pond's rich and vibrant history, including an early edition copy of *Walden*;
- A sustainability kiosk by Lucid Technologies highlighting the building's sustainable features and performance; and,
- Two mobile interactive exhibits for elementary school children.

"This exhibition enhances the new Visitor Center, and will provide an opportunity for the public to learn more about the extraordinary life and contributions of Henry David Thoreau," **said Administration and Finance Secretary Michael J. Heffernan**. "Our administration is proud to have supported this project, as well as ongoing climate change and resiliency efforts across the Commonwealth, in our capital budget plans."

Four new outdoor interpretive displays have also been installed at the original site of Thoreau's cabin, its replica, and at two of the reservation's entrance areas. Additionally, a Ken Burns production of an Ewer Brothers film is now on display for public viewing at the Visitor Center. The film, which was funded by the Walden Woods Project, beautifully captures the influence Walden Pond had on Thoreau.

"Thoreau was a keen observer of the natural world. His writings provide insights into some of the most urgent issues of our time. These include understanding and protecting the biological diversity of life; living on a planet of limited resources; and the role of personal responsibility in today's world," **said Walden Woods Project Founder and Musician Don Henley.** "After their experience at Walden, we hope visitors will leave inspired and ready to engage in a wide range of environmental and social reform challenges."

For information regarding Walden Pond State Reservation, its hours of operations, address, parking opportunities, and other amenities, please visit the DCR's [website](#).